

12th Tactical Fighter Wing Reunion

Leo C. Boston War Memorial Park, Fremont County Airport, Canon City, Colorado

19 September 2008, 1:00

Doughty: Welcome to members of the U.S. Air Force 12th Tactical Fighter Wing Association attending our reunion, including member General Boddie, and Association president, Dave Hutchings. Welcome also to current members of the 12th Flying Training Wing from Randolph Air Force Base at San Antonio, Texas, including wing commander, Colonel Van Ovost; welcome to the U.S. Air Force Academy Band: The Galaxy Brass Quartet, including leader, Master Sergeant Jeff Hatfield; welcome to the Patriot Guard members; the Canon City High School Junior ROTC color guard; Taps Bugler, Tim Grabin; Fremont County commissioners; Reverend Sheilah Rollins, of Mercy Today Ministries; Fremont County 4-H Club members providing the food, parachutists of the High Sky Adventures Parachute Club, Canon City *Daily Record* news reporter, Charlotte Burrous; welcome to our other Fremont County friends, and visitors. I'm Ron Doughty. I was an F-4 aircraft fighter pilot in the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing in Vietnam in 1969, and I helped organize this event as part of the 12th reunion and I helped organize the 12th portion of this memorial monument in this war memorial park. We appreciate your attendance and participation in this event which we have organized to honor those who gave their lives while assigned to the Air Force 12th Tactical Fighter Wing.

Please stand for the posting of the colors by the color guard and the playing of the national Anthem.

Band: National anthem

Rev. Sheilah Rollins: Invocation.

Matsuda: I'm Ron Matsuda. I was an F-4 aircraft fighter pilot in the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing in Vietnam in 1967, and I am currently the vice president of the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing Association. I welcome you and I'd like to introduce our keynote speaker, Brigadier General J. Timothy Boddie Jr. After being commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1954, he entered the U.S. Air Force Pilot Training program in 1955. Subsequently, he completed various assignments flying F-84, T-33, F-86, F-100, B-57, and F-4 aircraft. General Boddie was an F-4 aircraft fighter pilot in the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, during 1966. He flew 201 combat missions, including 57 missions over North Vietnam. During the following 17 years of his career, General Boddie served in a wide variety of important assignments, including wing commander at Osan Air Base, South Korea. General Boddie's final assignment was as deputy director for operations, J-3, National Military Command Center, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D.C., and he retired in 1983. General Boddie is a command pilot with more than 5,000 hours in jet fighter aircraft. His military decorations and awards include the Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Meritorious Service medal with two Oak Leaf clusters, the Air Medal

with 13 Oak Leaf clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Air Force Outstanding Unit award Ribbon with three Oak Leaf clusters and "V" device, the Combat Readiness Medal, the National Defense Service Medal with three service stars, the Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm and the Vietnam Campaign Medal. He is also entitled to wear the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Badge. Welcome Brigadier General Tim Boddie.

Boddie: Thank you for the kind introduction and welcome to all of you who are attending this reunion event here in beautiful Colorado. We traveled here this morning from Denver and the trip provided truly a spectacular view of this beautiful country. The 12th Tactical Fighter Wing was activated in April 1962 at MacDill AFB. First equipped with F-84 aircraft, the 12th stood an important alert commitment during the Cuban missile confrontation with the Soviet Union. The 12th was chosen to be the first Air Force combat wing to convert to the new F-4 *Phantom II* and the wing was soon involved in firepower demonstrations, exercises and, ultimately, the Paris Air Show. The conflict in Southeast Asia was escalating and throughout 1965 the wing supported operations by rotating squadrons quarterly to Naha Air Base in Japan. The 12th began its permanent deployment to Vietnam at an airfield at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base in November, 1965. From this location the wing carried out close air support, interdiction, and combat air patrol missions over North and South Vietnam and Laos, in addition to augmenting U.S. Forces in Korea after the capture of the USS *Pueblo*. In March, 1970, as part of the Vietnamization process and phase out of the F-4C, the aircraft and personnel of the 12th were dispersed, and fighter operations at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base were halted. At the same time, the 37th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phu Cat Air Base was re-designated the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing. Then equipped with two squadrons of F-4Ds, the wing continued combat operations until it was inactivated in November, 1971.

At Cam Ranh Bay, initially the wing flew from a runway consisting of aluminum plates laid out on the sand and we lived and operated in tents. Soon a concrete runway was built and buildings were constructed. We employed a wide variety weapons, including general purpose bombs, a variety of cluster bomb weapons, napalm, air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles, rockets, and 20-millimeter guns. The wing repeatedly distinguished itself and its contributions reflected great credit upon itself and the U.S. Air Force. Awards included a Presidential Unit Citation, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, and the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Unit Award.

Over the years, thousands of airmen and officers served in operating the aircraft, and in support operations by the wing support units, and the base tenant organizations performing a wide variety of jobs ranging from maintaining equipment and facilities to treating patients in the 12th hospital.

Unfortunately, during its operations, the wing suffered significant losses. Prior to arrival at Cam Ranh Bay, the wing lost three aircraft and five crew members. During subsequent operations in Vietnam, the wing suffered the loss of over 100 more personnel. Today, as we participate in our reunion, we are gathered here to remember and honor those who gave their lives and to re-dedicate this memorial monument to the people

whose names are listed on the brick wall here.

About 12 years ago, former 12th member, Gene Rust, a Denver resident, discovered this memorial monument here at the Leo C. Boston War Memorial Park, which had been developed by the Fremont County government. Bricks on the wall had been engraved with the names of Fremont County military service fatalities. The F-4 aircraft on display here was especially interesting to 12th veterans because of its tailcode indicating that it had once been assigned to the 12th. It was also coincidental that Ron Packard, a native of Canon City, was a member of the 12th when he was lost in North Vietnam.

With the help of the Canon City War Memorial Park Commission, the Fremont County Veterans Service Officer, and Fremont County Commissioners, 12th veterans obtained an agreement which set aside panel J of the memorial wall (the section nearest to the F-4) for inscription of the names of all known 12th casualties. Fund-raising efforts were conducted and the engraving was completed during 2001. September 16, 2001 was selected as the dedication ceremony date. Brigadier General Peter Sutton, then the commander of the 12th Flying Training Wing was to be guest speaker. An emergency caused cancellation of the F-16 flyover and General Sutton's appearance. Still, the USAF Band of The Rockies, the USAF High Frontier Honor Guard/Color guard, and a chaplain of the Air Force Falcons were on hand to make the dedication a success. General Sutton provided his written remarks for that ceremony, and I'd like to repeat a portion of those remarks.

"The 12th Tactical Fighter Wing has a long and distinguished history of selfless commitment to defending our great nation, beginning with the wing's activation in 1962. Through the Cuban Missile Crisis and the war in Vietnam, the 12th was home to hundreds of real American heroes - true patriots who risked their lives to protect freedom and democracy."

"The memorial you are dedicating today honors those courageous airmen who gave their lives while serving in the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing. To the families of those airmen, thank you for their service and your commitment to preserving their memory and the honorable lineage of the 12th. The wing's participation in Vietnam ended when it was deactivated in 1971. Its distinction of providing America with superior air power continued though when it was redesignated the 12th Flying Training Wing at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas."

"I sincerely regret missing your memorial dedication - please accept my most heartfelt support for this memorial and the people it represents." Signed, PETER U. SUTTON, Brigadier General, USAF

We are honored to have here today the current commander of the 12th Flying Training Wing. The current wing is carrying on the heritage of our tactical fighter wing. I'd like to introduce Colonel Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, who will make some remarks. She graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1988. Her many assignments included test pilot, instructor pilot, squadron commander, and Vice Commander of the 12th Flying Training Wing. Colonel Van Ovost is a command pilot with more than 4000 hours in aircraft including the C-12C, C-17A, C-23A, C-141B/A, F-15B, F-16B, KC-

135R, T-1A, T-37B and T-38A.

Her awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Air Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

Welcome Colonel Van Ovost.

Van Ovost: General Boddie, thank you for that wonderful introduction. Good afternoon, members and families of the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing, and other guests who join us at this Memorial Ceremony today. The members of our group who traveled from San Antonio to represent the 12th Flying Training Wing are proud and honored to be with you today.

If you think about it, this is a lot like a family reunion ... we – the 12th Flying Training Wing – are the youngest sibling in the family, born in 1972; the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing is our “big brother,” born in 1962; and we have several older “brothers” and “sisters” in the proud lineage of the 12th that dates back to 1941! So, just as real families do at reunions, I’d like to get you caught up on some of what we’ve been doing in the 12th as we carry on the proud traditions of our family tree.

But before I get to that, I’d like to take just a minute to talk about some general Air Force topics, because our focus at the wing today is tied to the current priorities of the Air Force. As you know, this past year was a turbulent time in our force when the Secretary and Chief of Staff stepped down. We have since turned the corner and are on a solid vector to reestablish our reputation and the confidence of the American people in their Air Force through the leadership of Secretary Donley and General Schwartz. We have a renewed focus that is taking us back to the basics. For example, the recently revised mission statement has a familiar back-to-basics ring to it: “The mission of the United States Air Force is to Fly, Fight and Win ... in Air, Space and Cyberspace.”

So, from the top down, the Air Force is refocused on the basic things that have made us the most feared and lethal Air Force in the world. In Air Education and Training Command, the parent command of the 12th, the focus is on recruiting, training and educating the warriors who will carry the force forward. At Randolph, the mission of the 12th Flying Training Wing is “training the world’s finest Airmen for tomorrow ... deploying combat-ready warriors today.” We do that by developing outstanding instructor pilots who go out to our Undergraduate Pilot Training bases and mold the next generation of Air Force aviators. We conduct the only combat systems officer training program for our navigators and electronic warfare officers in the Department of Defense. And we further hone the tactical skills of our fighter-bomber instructors and students with the Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals mission.

I am very proud of the airmen warriors of the 12th Flying Training Wing. They have done some pretty amazing things over the past few years that I would like to highlight. -- Simply stated, we are Airpower's Blacksmith! As the sole Air Force foundry of Pilot

Instructor and Combat Systems Officer training, we completed 90,844 missions and logged more than 250,000 flying hours in graduating 1,704 aviators from June 2006 to June 2008.

-- In the Global War on Terrorism, a Phoenix rose from the ashes when the 12th took on the task of commanding Iraq's first flying training squadron and stood up an undergraduate pilot training program. We are still at the helm of the squadron today and are literally rebuilding the Iraqi Air Force and training them in counterinsurgency techniques with our deployed instructor pilot expertise.

-- Besides developing the Iraqi Air Force, we deployed nearly 670 members to 20 locations throughout the globe. On any given day, more than 200 people from Randolph are downrange in combat zones. Some of them are directly embedded in Army battalions, serving as Battalion Electronic Warfare Officers charged with the counter IED mission. At home, the 12th trains all services and coalition members on counter IED techniques, we published the Army's Counter IED manual, we led the way on Information Operations Dynamic Targeting for CENTCOM, and created the future electronic warfare skill set for the Air Force's CyberCommand.

-- Members of the 12th trail-blazed AETC-wide combat air forces adversary support during seven deployments recently in which we flew 215 sorties. By using our more economical trainer aircraft to fly adversary roles, we saved the Air Force \$15 million dollars and further enhanced our value and relevance with our combat air forces brethren.

-- In a bittersweet moment, we sent the T-37 into retirement with a historic T-37 final flight and a ceremony attended by 350 guests. It was a fitting sendoff for the Tweet and closed the storied training life of this UPT workhorse that was in service for 42 years, 597,000 sorties and 813,000 flying hours.

-- The departure of the T-37 allowed us to consolidate two squadrons into one, and we did this with a 98% effective rate with zero impact on our flow of instructor pilots into the T-6A Joint Primary Aircraft Training System at our UPT sites. This consolidation inactivated the 558th, and kept the 559th Fighting Billygoats...thus keeping a common thread in the 12th's history all the way back to 1941.

-- As always, we have remained connected to our past through the 560th and their annual Freedom Flyers Reunion and POW/MIA Symposium. This year marked the 35th anniversary of this heritage event, and we look forward to many more reunions.

-- Many of our programs – too many to mention – have won recognition at Air Force level and beyond, from our Services functions like the clubs and child care centers, to the mission support organizations like the fire department, postal service center and recycling program. We have great people doing great things everyday in the 12th!

I could go on and on, but suffice it to say the members of the 12th are engaged in their training and support missions; we're supporting the Global War on Terror, and we're leading the way in the command and Air Force with many of our innovative programs.

So, the 12th – your sibling 12th – and the youngest in the family is doing exceptionally well and has a bright future. Our back to basics focus will continue to give us opportunities to excel by concentrating on our fundamental missions and the Core Values that make us who we are. Back to basics also gives us pause to reflect on our heritage. We share a common spirit with our brothers and sisters in arms. Our lineage to the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing bonds us together as Airmen through a shared experience and a calling most Americans can never realize or comprehend.

Retired Lt. Gen. Robert Springer once said, “The American public looks to us to defend their freedoms and their way of life; they charge us with the care of their sons and daughters.” That is an awesome responsibility; yet every Airmen here and throughout the Air Force – past, present and future – gladly accepts that responsibility because it comes with the territory. It makes us who we are as Airmen and warriors. It is an ethos that is hard to explain, yet we all know what it means. We have a clear and confident understanding in our calling even if we can’t always put it into words. It is our spirit....The spirit that conquers all.

“Spiritus Omnia Vincet.” The Spirit Conquers All. That is our shared motto that birthed with our parent unit, the 12th Bombardment Group. “Spiritus Omnia Vincet.” They are words that have become very important to me in recent months as I focus on the basics and the pursuit of flawless execution of our mission at Randolph. For it is indeed our spirit, our ethos, our will – call it what you want – but it is the essence of each Airmen and the synergy of that spirit combined with others that lifts us beyond our individual abilities. That spirit has always been alive in the 12th, and I am proud to say we are carrying it forward. Our spirit is our heritage. It is what links the lives and experiences of those, like many of you, who have come before us and showed us the way.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today, our 12th family! And from your younger generation, thank you for your service and commitment to our nation...we truly appreciate your sacrifices and the sacrifices of your families. God Bless America, and God Bless the 12th!

Matsuda: At this time, we will recognize those who gave their lives and who we have come here to honor and remember today. (Reading of the names)

Tim Grabin: Taps

Rev. Sheilah Rollins: Convocation

Matsuda: Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes our formal ceremony. You are encouraged to view the monument, and all are invited to enjoy a social hour and enjoy refreshments.

Parachutists of High Sky Adventures Parachute Club: Fly in displaying American flag

